

# BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL - IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## WHY DO I NEED TO DO AN ASSESSMENT?

This Impact Assessment isn't designed to 'catch you out'. It is designed to help you think about and improve the way you deliver your services by ensuring that they are as inclusive as possible.

It will help you to test the impact on people when reviewing or developing new policies, strategies and functions to find out if there is any adverse impact or illegal discrimination or any unmet need or requirements.

Legislation imposes duties on local authorities to promote equality and tackle discrimination related to Age, Disability, Gender (includes marital status, gender reassignment), Race (colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality) Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, However, we have also included discretionary but important additional categories relevant to our District in this assessment process: People Living in Rural Areas, People living in Urban Areas, People on Low Incomes and People for whom English is not their first Language.

To comply with legislation the Council is required to publish its Impact Assessments and these will be made available on our website.

## WHAT HAS TO BE IMPACT ASSESSED?

You need to do an Assessment when reviewing, making changes to or developing new and existing policies, strategies and functions that are relevant to equality. This can be determined as follows:

### RELEVANT – Impact Assessment must be done

- The policy, strategy or function will impact on people (residents, staff or people living, visiting or working in Braintree District)
- The policy, strategy or function may benefit some people or communities and not others

### NOT RELEVANT – Impact Assessment not needed

- No intended impact on people
- The policy, strategy or function is administrative only

## HOW DO I DO THIS ASSESSMENT?

By answering the questions in the following Assessment template you will be able to consider any possible positive or negative impacts that a new or existing policy, strategy or function may have on defined groups, using data as evidence, and take action accordingly.

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING

Name of Policy, Strategy or Function being assessed	Benefits Surgeries at area offices
Is this a new or existing Policy, Strategy or Function?	Reduction in service
Person responsible for the assessment	Trevor Wilson
Service Area	Finance
Head of Service	Trevor Wilson, Head of Finance
Date	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2011

### **1. What is the main purpose of the Policy, Strategy or Function?**

To provide a face to face benefits advice service at Halstead Library and Witham Library for claimants and potential claimants.

### **2. Who else will be involved in the delivery of this Proposal?**

**If so, state who they are. They will need to be involved in producing this Impact Assessment**

Head of Finance, Benefits Manager, Benefits team, Customer Services, ECC Libraries team.

### **3. Who will be affected by the proposal?**

Benefits claimants and those seeking Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit advice.

**4. To ensure that you have all available information that could help you to undertake this Impact Assessment complete the following table to evidence which of the following sources of information you are using, or intend to use, to assess the impact of the Policy, Strategy or Function on people within the following equality groups:** Disability, Race (colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality) Religion or Belief, Sex (marital status, gender reassignment), Sexual orientation, Age, People living in rural areas, People living in urban areas, People on low incomes, People for whom English is not their first language. **The sources listed are for guidance so please add/substitute your own categories as appropriate.**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Reference (date/ relevant publication, etc)</b>
Performance Indicators/Targets	Not Applicable
User Satisfaction Surveys	Not Applicable
Consultation results (new and existing)	Consultation results from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your Council, your Say</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• People's panel</li> </ul>
Staff monitoring data	Area office surveys carried out between 27/09/10 – 10/10/10.
Complaints information	Not Applicable
Demographic profiles (census, etc)	Not Applicable
Local Needs Analysis (internal or external sources)	Not Applicable
Staff Survey results	Not Applicable
Research reports	Not Applicable
Best Practice Information	Not Applicable
Benchmarking data	Not Applicable
Expert views of people representing the equality groups	Not Applicable

5. Based on the data indicated in question 4, assess the impact that the Policy, Strategy or Function could have on the groups below. The impact could be positive i.e. it will benefit this group, it could help to promote equality, access, or improve relations within equality groups. The impact could be negative i.e. it could disadvantage them. You need to explain the reasons for the impact assessment you have made

Equality Group	Category	Positive Impact	Negative Impact/ Risk	Explanation
Age	Children 0-16	N/A	N/A	
	Young People 17-25	N/A	N/A	
	Ages 26-59	N/A	N/A	
	Older People 60+	N/A	N/A	Free advice will continue via the telephone and website
Disability	Blind/Partially Sighted	N/A	N/A	Free advice will continue via the telephone and website
	Deaf/Hearing Impaired	N/A	N/A	Free advice will continue via the telephone and website
	Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties	N/A	N/A	Free advice will continue via the telephone and website
	Learning Difficulties	N/A	N/A	Free advice will continue via the telephone and website
	Mental Health Difficulties	N/A	N/A	Free advice will continue via the telephone and website
	Learning Difficulties	N/A	N/A	Free advice will continue via the telephone and website
Gender	Women	N/A	N/A	Free advice will continue via the telephone and website
	Men	N/A	N/A	Free advice will continue via the telephone and website
	Transgender	N/A	N/A	

Race	White including English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Eastern European (Polish Slovak, etc) Other White background – please specify	N/A	N/A	
	Asian including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Other Asian background – please specify	N/A	N/A	
	Black including Caribbean, Somali, Other African, Other Black background – please specify	N/A	N/A	
	Mixed Dual Heritage including White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other mixed background – please specify	N/A	N/A	
	Gypsies/Travellers	N/A	N/A	
Religion/Belief	Buddhist	N/A	N/A	
	Christian	N/A	N/A	
	Hindu	N/A	N/A	
	Jewish	N/A	N/A	
	Muslim	N/A	N/A	
	Sikh	N/A	N/A	
	Other – please specify	N/A	N/A	
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian Gay men Heterosexual Bi-sexual	N/A	N/A	
Social Inclusion	People living in rural areas	N/A	N/A	
	People living in urban areas	N/A	N/A	
	People on low incomes	N/A	N/A	
	English not first language	N/A	N/A	

Other (optional)	Customers in the Halstead and Witham area.	No	Yes	Customers will not be able to receive <b>complex</b> benefits advice face to face from Halstead Library and Witham Library.
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**6. Based on your answer to question 5, could the Policy, Strategy or Function discriminate against any of the groups below either directly or indirectly**

**NOTE: Direct Discrimination** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

**Indirect Discrimination** occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would disadvantage people on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, unless the practice can be objectively justified by a legitimate aim

Group	Direct Yes/No	Indirect Yes/No	If Yes state how
Age	No	No	
Disability	No	No	
Gender	No	No	
Race	No	No	

Religion/Belief	No	No	
Sexual Orientation	No	No	
Social Inclusion	No	No	

**7. Referring to your answers to questions 5 and 6, can you easily minimize or remove any negative impacts identified and if so how?**

Customers will still be able to hand in their Benefit Claim form at both libraries and their evidence will be verified by Library staff.

An online application form with guidance is now available to customers on our website. Customers can either access this from home or use the free internet facility in any library across the district.

Customers can phone from home or use the free phone facility in the Halstead and Witham Libraries to access Benefit Officers' directly.

Customers can travel to Braintree to receive benefit advice face to face.

**8. If the negative impacts cannot be minimized or removed, they need to be justified. Please explain how and what the evidence for this is.**

You may want to refer back to the monitoring data you listed in Question 4 to answer this question.

N/A

9. If you have identified any impacts as positive in Question 5, are there any further ways in which can you adapt the policy, strategy or function to increase or extend its positive benefits for equality groups? Please explain your reasoning.

10. Based on the information you have now provided in this assessment please proceed as follows:

<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Action</b>
No negative impacts have been identified and this has been justified with evidence	Go to Q11 and Sign Off
Negative impacts were identified but have been minimized or removed	Go to Q11 and Sign Off
There is insufficient evidence to reach a valid conclusion on the Impact	Go back and collect additional evidence/data and then complete a new Assessment
Negative impacts were identified but have not been minimized, removed or justified	Complete the Action Plan below and then sign off by completing Q11

11. Sign Off

<b>Assessment Completed by (name &amp; signature)</b>	Trevor Wilson
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<b>Senior Manager (name &amp; signature)</b>	Trevor Wilson
<b>Date:</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> January 2011</b>

**A copy of the signed Impact Assessment and any Action Plan should be retained and appended to the relevant Policy/Strategy document or Business Plan. A signed hard copy and an electronic copy should be sent to Charmaine Dean, Head of Community Services. It is a statutory requirement to publish the results of Equality Impact Assessments. We will make these available on our website.**

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN**

**You now need to develop and implement an Action Plan to address the negative impacts identified that could not be minimized, removed or justified.**

**This should include more detailed research, further data collection or consultation with representatives from the equality group(s) who you have identified as being likely to suffer a negative impact/be disadvantaged by the Policy, Strategy or Function being assessed.**

## **ACTION PLAN**

<b>Equality Group (eg young people, blind/partially sighted, etc)</b>	<b>Negative Impact Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Who</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>


**ACTION PLAN MONITORING**

How will you monitor progress of your Action Plan? And at what intervals?	
How frequently will this monitoring take place?	
Who will be responsible for this?	

**Now go back to question 11 to complete and sign off this Assessment**